Ashwell
Rural District Council.

REPORT

For the Year 1897,

BY

BUSHELL ANNINGSON, M.D., M.A.,

Cambridge University Lecturer in Medical Jurisprudence,
University Examiner in State Medicine,
Fellow and Member of the Council and of the Board of Examiners, Sanitary Institute of Great Britain,
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ASHWELL RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

I have the honour to communicate for the information of the Rural District Council of Ashwell my Annual Report for the year 1897.

Deaths and Death-rate.

In the compilation of this report a disturbing factor has been introduced by the erection on September 30th, 1897, of the contributory parish of Royston and the associated parts of adjoining parishes into a separate Urban District. Acting upon the opinion of the Local Government Board obtained for me by Mr. H. F. J. Banham, I have treated the district for the calculation of Vital Statistics as having existed up to the end of the year.

The number of deaths which have been registered in the several parishes is 117; this number must be corrected by an addition of one which has occurred in Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, and by a deduction of eleven which have occurred in the Union Workhouse, belonging to the Melbourn District, making a corrected total of 107, which on the published Census return of 1891 and the corrections supplied to me by the Superintendent Registrar gives a death-rate from all causes and at all ages per 1000 living per annum of 13·3. The death-rate in England and Wales for the same period is given as 17·4 in the Report of the Registrar General.

Zymotic Death-rate.

Deaths in the group of zymotic diseases in the District have been from Typhoid Fever, 1; Diarrhœa, 3; total, 4; equal to a death-rate from these diseases of 0·5 per thousand living per annum.

Births and Birth-rate.

The total number of births registered is 188, equal to a birth-rate of 23·5 per thousand living per annum. The birth-rate for England and Wales for the same period is given at 29·7.

The ratio of deaths under one year of age to one thousand registered births is 80.

District.	Deaths Registered	Share of Workhouse	Adden-brooke's Hospital.	Fulbourn Asylum.	Three Counties Asylum.	Total.
Ashwell R.D.C.	104	2	1	—	—	107

DISEASE INCIDENCE.

Small Pox.

No cases of Small Pox have engaged attention during the year.

Scarlatina.

Four cases of Scarlet Fever in three households have been notified, one at Barkway, two at Reed, and one at Royston. Another of the frequent instances of importation of disease into the Rural District, by children sent into the country under the auspices of the Association for providing summer holidays for poor children, has occurred at Reed, where happily the measures taken to prevent the spread of the disease proved successful. The case at Barkway could not be satisfactorily traced, but was probably imported from outside the district.

The same remarks may apply to a case at Wrexham Terrace, Royston.

Diphtheria.

No case of diphtheria has been notified during the year.

Typhoid Fever.

Four cases of Typhoid Fever in three households have been notified, two in Royston, one at Ashwell, and one at Nuthampstead. One in Melbourn Road, Royston, in February was probably the result of defective sanitary conditions of the house, which have since been remedied; the other at Godfrey's Terrace (July 25th) was contracted on a journey and was moved into the Cottage Hospital on July 26th, the Infectious Ward not being available on account of a recent order of the Local Government Board.

The case at Nuthampstead was probably attributable to the faulty sanitary condition of the house.

The Ashwell case at the end of December occurred at Foresters' Cottages, a row of four newly-built houses on the Station Road, near the "Spring." The well water supplying this row of houses was known to be polluted, but their occupation had notwithstanding been permitted by the Sanitary Authority because an excellent supply from the "Spring" head, a few yards distant, was available. All the members of the household assailed had been drinking the water from the polluted well, but the mother of the family was the only one who contracted Typhoid Fever. The woman had however been ailing since her arrival home from the Hitchin Infirmary, where the woman's daughter informed me there were two or three cases of Typhoid Fever during the time her mother was an inmate, but there was no good evidence to show that this circumstance had any connection with the case.

Disinfection, isolation at home and school exclusion, were relied upon to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

Isolation Hospital.

Although the incidence of zymotic disease has been unusually light during the year under review, such a fortunate circumstance cannot always be expected; I am therefore glad, especially in view of the action of the Local Government Board, in disallowing further use of the building set apart for infectious cases at the Union Workhouse for persons other than paupers, that a Committee of the Council has been appointed to confer with corresponding committees of the Melbourn Rural and Royston Urban District Councils for the formulation of a scheme for a joint Isolation Hospital.

WATER SUPPLY.

Water Supply.

The consideration of the question of a better water supply for the village of Reed has in accordance with the wish expressed in my report for the year 1896 been revived during the year under consideration. On the 29th July I examined some "blow-holes" on a slight elevation above and at a little distance from the village, suggested by Mr. Bowman, the owner of the property; there was evidence that the water was continually flowing from the said "blow-holes." On a report to the Council on the 4th August following a resolution was adopted requesting the Medical Officer of Health and the Inspector of Nuisances to take steps with the sanction and assistance of Mr. Bowman to gauge the flow of the water. The project was not feasible at the time and Mr. Bowman's serious and prolonged illness has caused an unavoidable delay; the necessary examination will no doubt be undertaken during the early months of the present year.

At Nuthampstead where the need of an improved water supply has been the frequent subject of remark on my part, the supply almost entirely failed during the later half of the year and was supplemented by water cart service at the instance of the District Council. The provision of a satisfactory water supply to this village presents many physical difficulties. A Committee was appointed of two with the Medical Officer of Health, Mr Bowman being one, whose illness above referred to has in this instance also interposed an unavoidable delay.

The village of Kelshall is still unsatisfactorily supplied from surface ponds; I therefore suggest the revival of the consideration of my report of 7th August, 1893.

The question of an improved water supply to the village of Ashwell, especially on the north side, still remains unsolved. Chemical examination of the water from the wells along the line of the north side of High Street, has in most instances indicated organic pollution, and the inhabitants are consequently obliged to take their supply for drinking purposes either from the

"Springs," a stand pipe fixed near Fordham's Brewery, or by special permission from wells situate on private property to the south of High Street, often at considerable distance from their dwellings. As far back as the year 1876, Dr. R. Thorne Thorne, now Sir R. Thorne Thorne, K.C.B., made a special report on this and other villages in the area of the Royston Union, wherein he states *inter alia* "that these (wells) are at times sunk in yards where heaps of refuse are stored up, and hence the contents occasionally acquire a deep amber tint, owing to the soakage of filth. The drainage of the place is most imperfect and finds its way into the river. The common privy-with-pit, and all its attendant sources of nuisance, and injury to health is general. Cases of enteric fever have been by no means of unfrequent occurrence in the village. In April, 1873, the Rural Sanitary Authority was informed, in a report prepared by their Inspector of Nuisances, that the contents of 'the wells on the north side of the village' were 'unfit for drinking,' the water being stained by soakage of liquid manure from farm yards, pig styes, and manure holes. A further report by the Medical Officer of Health, relating to the use of the polluted river water at Ashwell, was laid before the Authority in July, 1874, and a Parochial Committee was then appointed to report as to the steps which it was necessary to adopt. In August, 1874, this committee reported to the effect that the various pollutions to which the river was subjected in Ashwell should be remedied, and that 'one or two pumps should be placed in the most populous parts for public use.' No definite results seem to have followed these measures."

It appears from the papers by Mr. H. George Fordham F.G.S., and Mr. Harold Warren, Assoc. M. Inst. C.E., on the water-levels in the chalk near Royston, published in the transactions of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, that the plane of saturation slopes from S.W. to N.E., escaping at several well-known springs all N.E. of Ashwell, the first mentioned being at "Cam rise" at the extreme N.E. corner of the village where the chalk waters therefore would appear to impinge and escape. It is not quite clear whether the same geological formation extends so far to the W. of the village as to render it probable that the waters may impinge on the further corner of the village and thus afford a supply for the other parts mentioned; it will be worth while for the Council to make some investigations into this question.

Six certificates have been granted under the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, Sec. 6.

Six samples of potable water have been taken for analysis, two were found to be of good quality, and four were found to be polluted.

DRAINAGE.

Drainage.

Several road gulleys to the West end of the village of Ashwell have been complained of, and the evil rectified by fitting them with traps.

The parish drains which have been complained of and mentioned by me in my report for the year 1896, have been cleared out by the Surveyor, but the general sewerage system still requires consideration as pointed out by me in my special report of Jan. 6th, 1897, and adverted to more or less in previous years.

In consequence of a complaint received by the Inspector of Nuisances of the state of the parish drain at the Rushing Wells Lane, Barkway, opposite the bakehouse and shops in the occupation of Mr. Burr, I in company with the Inspector of Nuisances, examined the drain, and recommended the District Council to require the construction of a brick invert to facilitate the flow of liquid and thus prevent the retention along the mud bottom, but it has been decided by the Local Authority to abate the nuisance by an extension for about 40 yards of the 12in. glazed pipe drain, a plan which will be even better than the one suggested by myself.

At Barley the drain in the High Street has been much improved by the removal of a cesspit in the footpath and the disconnection of house drains that had been improperly connected therewith.

Several sanitary improvements of a minor character have been effected either by removal, diversion, or ventilation of house drains in the parishes of Ashwell, Barley and Royston.

SUNDRIES.

Unhealthy Dwellings, &c.

At Kelshall six cottages which had been reported as being dilapidated have since been repaired voluntarily by the owners.

At Hinxworth a case of overcrowding has been satisfactorily abated by the removal of some members of the family.

The Workshops, Slaughter-houses, and Milk Shops have been frequently visited during the year.

Appended hereto is the Inspector's tabular statement of sanitary work, and the tables of Population, Births, Deaths and Sickness.

BUSHELL ANNINGSON.

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ASHWELL.

INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES' REPORT, 1897.

Animals removed	3
Bedding infected, disinfected	1
Certificates under Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, granted	6
Cesspits cleaned out	12
Cottages re-thatched and repaired	24
Drains cleaned out, repaired, and dung heaps removed ...	20
Houses fumigated	6
,, new, erected	6
Milk Purveyors registered	2
New closets, privies and closets connected with sewers ...	11
,, drains made	9
Notices to repairs	12
,, abate nuisances	20
,, ,, overcrowding	1
Ponds cleaned out	3
Privies and closets repaired...	15
Privy cesspits filled up	12
Removed to Ward in Cottage Hospital (Infectious case)	1
Samples of water taken	6
Sink drains disconnected	4
Travellers' vans inspected	40
Ventilators to existing drains fixed and repaired ...	3
Visits to infectious cases	24
,, slaughter houses, bakehouses, dairies and cow sheds	36
Water courses cleaned out	2
Wells cleaned out and pumps repaired	4

H. N. WOODWARD,

Inspector of Nuisances.

TABLE A.

Table of Deaths during the year 1897, in the Rural Sanitary District of Ashwell; classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

Names of Localities adopted for the purposes of these statistics, Public Institutions being shown as separate Localities. Columns for Population and Births are in Table B.	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined Ages.							Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age.																										
													Fevers.																					
	At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upward		Small Pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.	English Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhœa and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Ague.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	Other Diseases.	Cancer.	Influenza.	Pyæmia.	Total.
(a.)	(b.)	(c.)	(d.)	(e.)	(f.)	(g.)	(h.)	(i.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21a	21b	21c	22
Ashwell	104	15	4	3	4	26	52	Under 5	...	...	...	...	.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3	1	...	12	...	...	...	19
								5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	13	14	2	40	5	1	—	85
Union Workhouse	13	...	...	...	1	4	8	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
								5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	9	1	—	—	13
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
									—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
									—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
									—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	117	15	4	3	5	30	60	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3	1	...	12	...	...	...	19
								5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	13	15	2	49	6	1	—	98

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.

Deaths occurring outside district among persons belonging thereto. Addenbrooke's Hospital	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	Under 5	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
								5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto. Union Workhouse.	11	...	...	...	1	3	7	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
								5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	7	1	—	—	11

TABLE B.

Table of Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year, 1897, in the Rural Sanitary District of Ashwell; classified according to DISEASES, AGES *and* LOCALITIES.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these statistics; Public Institutions being shown as separate localities.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.	Registered Births.		New Cases of Sickness in each Locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.													Number of such Cases Removed from their Homes in the several Localities for Treatment in Isolation Hospital.												
								FEVERS.												FEVERS.									
				Smallpox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.	English Cholera.	Erysipelas.			Smallpox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.	Cholera.	Erysipelas		
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	†																												
Ashwell ...	7999	188	Under 5	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			5 upwards	...	3	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Union Workhouse			Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			5 upwards	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
				...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
				...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTALS	7999	188	Under 5	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			5 upwards	...	3	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

NOTE.—"Notification of Infectious Disease" has been compulsory in the District since 1st March, 1890. There is no Isolation Hospital available for non-pauper cases of infectious disease. † Estimate after readjustment of Parish Boundaries.